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Senate Panel Opens Probe With Request

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The special Senate committee investigating Billy Carter yesterday launched its probe by formally asking President Carter and key members of his administration to deliver by Friday pertinent papers and documents relating to Billy Carter's ties to Libya.

The president said in a statement yesterday that he will present a report early next week to the Senate committee and said he was willing to appear in person before the panel to answer any questions that it has.

The committee, holding its first business meeting, indicated that its investigation will cover all aspects of Billy Carter's Libyan connection and his dealings with the White House that relate to his role as a foreign agent for Libya.

The committee asked Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti to tell it if any grand juries have "inquired into Libya's plan to gain influence in the United States" and what he can tell the panel about any such probes. The panel made a similar request of Civiletti about any grand juries investigating any connections between Libya and Robert Vesco, the financier who is a fugitive from justice, "or any matters relating to Billy Carter."

Besides the president and Civiletti, the committee sent hand-delivered letters to these key Carter aides: Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie, Energy Secretary Charles W. Duncan Jr., Commerce Secretary Philip Klutznick, FBI Director William Webster, CIA Director Stansfield Turner and the director of the National Security Agency, Vice Adm. Bobby R. Inman.

Committee Chairman Birch Bayh, D-Ind., also announced that the panel had subpoenaed The Charter Co. and its subsidiaries — Charter Oil Co., Charter Crude Oil Co., Carey Energy Co. and the Baha-

mian refinery, Borco, in which Charter maintains a 50 percent interest — for all documents "dealing with the president's brother and with Libya." The due date is Aug. 1.

Two new members from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday joined their Judiciary colleagues. They are Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., and Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind. There are five Democrats and four Republicans on the committee.

At the session, Bayh and Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., the committee vice chairman, received committee approval to hire a prestigious outside counsel to help out with the inquiry.

Bayh said the next committee meeting tomorrow will be devoted to determining where the investigation should lead; what kind of questions need to be asked and who should be called to testify.

He reported that after the agenda is set, the hope is to begin the hearings with one to three sessions next week, just days before the start of the Democratic National Convention in New York on Aug. 11.

Bayh and Thurmond said they doubted that any major figures — such as the president, Civiletti or Billy Carter — would be called that soon. Instead, they indicated they might begin by questioning State Department officials about U.S.-Libyan relations as groundwork.

In their letter to the president, Bayh and Thurmond asked for a wide range of documents, including correspondence, minutes, record, notes and notations of telephone or personal conversations.

They wrote that they were particularly interested in "Libya's effort to exert influence and promote its interests in this country, the relationship between Billy Carter and the government of Libya, the Department of Justice's investigation of that relationship and all contacts by White House officials with officials of the Department of Justice, Billy Carter, or officials of Libya concerning any of the above matters."

The committee also said to the president: "We believe you share our conviction that the White House and the executive departments not limit their responses to direct questions, but step forward with information which may assist the subcommittee in a just and early resolution of the matter before it."

The letter to Muskie requests "all documents relating to briefings of or contacts with Billy Carter by Department of State officials, both in the United States and abroad."

The request to State also asks for a report of communications by State with Libyan representatives as well as "a narrative statement of the U.S.-Libyan relations from 1970 to date, including an analysis of key issues and a chronology of principal decisions and events."

From Duncan and the Energy Department, the committee requested "all information in the custody or control of the department" concerning the Charter Co. Billy Carter has a "broker's" agreement with Charter Co. to provide it with Libyan oil. So far, he has produced none.

From Commerce, the committee requested wide information on dealing by U.S. businessmen with Libya.

The committee asked the FBI to tell it which individuals in the White House or the Department of Justice "received, read or had access to intelligence or other documents" relating to contacts or the relationships between Billy Carter and Libya.

From the FBI, CIA and the NSA, it asks reports of "all documents relating to contacts or communications between Billy Carter and officials, representatives or nationals of Libya."